

\$500-per-child tax credit to help families raise their children.

Fourth, it takes critical steps to extend health care to more Americans. It secures the Medicare Trust Fund for 10 years, making necessary reforms to help the program meet these budget targets and also to maintain its fundamental purpose. It will cover as many as 5 million presently uninsured children and help working people who are temporarily between jobs keep their health insurance. For the first time it would fully cover annual mammograms for older women and provide some respite care support for the many families who are caring for a family member with Alzheimer's.

Fifth, it advances our interests as the world's indispensable nation, reversing the downward spiral in international affairs spending, strengthening our ability to promote peace, and fighting global problems like drug trafficking, terrorism, and nuclear proliferation. And this budget meets our responsibilities to the community of nations by the concrete plan to promote reform, pay our bills, and put the United Nations back on sound financial footing.

I support a balanced budget. I am proposing a balanced budget. I do not support a constitutional amendment to balance the budget for reasons I have already outlined. I think it is neither necessary or wise, and it could have numerous unwanted consequences. It could throw our budget into the courts. It could force judges to make decisions they would normally never make and that they know they should not be making. And all that it takes to balance the budget is discipline and action.

I'd also like to say this. We believe our balanced budget plan will keep the budget more or less in balance. And I say that because it's impossible to predict everything that will happen. But based on the projections we now have, we believe we can maintain a balanced budget for more than two decades. So this is not going to be a one-time thing. And Director Raines will talk more about this when he goes through the details. But one of the things I think Americans have been afraid of is that even if we balance the budget, it will be a one-year blip, and then we'll go right back to the same

problems we've had in the past, particularly as the Baby Boomers age and move into the retirement years. We do not believe that is going to happen with this budget.

And Secretary Rubin and Mr. Raines can explain why, and I know you'll want to question them on that, but that is one of the most important findings of the work that we have been doing. We believe we can keep this budget in balance for a good long time.

Finally, let me say this. It is obvious—and most of you have reported on this—that there are still differences between the parties about how we should do this, but I am convinced those differences can be bridged. I have reviewed them in general, at least. I have been very impressed by the cooperative attitude which has been expressed by the leaders of the Republican Party in Congress. Some of the differences we have are truly principle differences, and we'll have to work hard to have an honorable compromise. But I believe that we can do it as long as the Republicans and the Democrats agree that we have to achieve this goal.

We've got the best chance in a generation to do it. The lion's share of the savings that we needed to make from the nightmarish projections we had 4 years ago have been put in place already, and it remains for us to take the last steps. I am confident we will, and I intend to do everything I can—everything I can over the next few months to see that we achieve this goal.

Now, I'd like to ask the Vice President to say a few words, and then we'll follow with Secretary Rubin, Mr. Raines, and however else they want to elucidate the budget.

Mr. Vice President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building.

## **Message to Federal Workers**

*February 6, 1997*

As I begin my second term as President, I want all of you to know how proud I am of your hard work and accomplishments during the past four years. I came to Washington with a high regard for civil servants, and you have only confirmed that opinion.

And I'm not the only one who has been impressed. Four years ago, public confidence in the federal government was at an all-time low. But you have begun to change that attitude. Even in a time of leaner budgets and smaller staffs, you have improved service to the public, forged effective partnerships with communities and private businesses, and discarded old-fashioned management systems. Now, for the first time in decades, public opinion of federal agencies is markedly on the rise. Congratulations—the credit for this stunning turnaround goes to you.

Vice President Gore and I are excited and optimistic about the prospects for America in the next four years. We are on the right track to the twenty-first century and are picking up speed as we continue to work with you to reinvent government. I believe that our nation will enter that new century stronger, more confident, and more capable than ever before. And I believe that a large part of that success will be achieved because of the energy and talent of each of you—the men and women of the federal government.

Thank you for all you do on behalf of your fellow Americans.

**Bill Clinton**

**Remarks Prior to Discussions With  
Prime Minister Viktor  
Chernomyrdin of Russia and an  
Exchange With Reporters  
February 7, 1997**

**The President.** I want to welcome Prime Minister Chernomyrdin to the White House and thank him for the work that he and the Vice President have done over the last couple of days dealing with the issues involving the relationships of Russia and the United States and NATO and Russia and a number of other issues. And I want to thank them for the work they've done to prepare the way for my meeting with President Yeltsin in Helsinki on March 20th and 21st.

And I also want to thank President Ahtisaari of Finland for hosting us at that meeting. I'm looking forward to it. It will be very important, and I feel quite optimistic about it because of the good relationships I've always had with President Yeltsin and

because of the work that the Prime Minister and the Vice President have done.

**Helsinki Summit and NATO Expansion**

**Q.** Two questions, Mr. President. Number one, was Helsinki chosen to accommodate the health of President Yeltsin? And two, how do you convince the President and Mr. Chernomyrdin that NATO expansion is not the threat that they seem to think it is?

**The President.** Well, first of all, Helsinki was decided upon for a number of reasons, but it worked well for both of us, and I feel good about it. I'm looking forward to going back there.

**Q.** Was health one of the reasons?

**The President.** Secondly, we just have started our meeting here, but I think you have to see this issue in the context of our—all American-Russian relations and the fact that Russia has emerged as a great democratic nation with such strong sense of partnership with the European countries. The best evidence of that is what we're all doing together in Bosnia today—for our partnership there.

**Juvenile Crime**

**Q.** Mr. President, one of the global issues on the forefront today is also the CDC report on suicide and homicide among juveniles. How do you react to the fact that the United States is leading the richest nations among homicides and suicides among 15-year-olds and under?

**The President.** I'm very concerned about it, and we're working on it. That's one of the reasons that I made such a big issue of juvenile crime and violence in the State of the Union. There is some indication that it is going down now, after years and years and years of exploding. The last figures we have for 1995 were somewhat encouraging.

But it is—it's an unacceptable condition. And we have too many children out there raising themselves on our streets, too many children who have not been embraced by their communities, who can't get what they need in their own families. And we have to—the rest of us have to do better. And a big part of what I hope we can work together on with the Congress is the whole juvenile justice package, which I think will be passed